

NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



AS I SEE IT

Great Teachers for Every Student, Great Leaders for Every School

December 17, 2010

North Carolina received an early Christmas present this week when we learned that almost 2,300 teachers working in our classrooms received National Board Certification in 2010. These educators have put in a good deal of time and effort to join our state's ranks of close to 18,000 accomplished National Board Certified Teachers. They have worked anywhere from one to three years to reflect on and improve their teaching techniques and document all of their progress and accomplishments in a final portfolio. To every member of the North Carolina's 2010 class of National Board teachers, congratulations on your new honor and thank you for helping our state continue to lead the nation with the largest number of educators who have earned this prestigious certification.

Great teachers are critical to student success, but they are not the only important component. To graduate every student prepared for higher education and the workplace, our schools must also have great leaders. That is why Gov. Perdue's "Career & College: Ready, Set, Go!" plan focuses on a number of new efforts to provide high quality professional development and leadership training to principals across the state.

One way we are delivering this training is through three Principal Leadership Academies funded by North Carolina's Race to the Top grant. The state's first principal academy, the Northeast Leadership Academy, opened in the fall of 2010. Twenty-five teachers and central office staff from low-achieving rural schools in Bertie, Hertford, Northampton, Halifax, Roanoke Rapids, Weldon City and Warren school districts are currently enrolled in the program. Other academies include the Sandhills Leadership Academy and the Piedmont Triad Leadership Academy, both set to open in the 2011-12 school year. These programs were approved by the State Board of Education earlier this month to offer professional development and alternative administrative licensure to aspiring principals who will lead low-performing and high-needs schools in 14 school districts.

The Principal Leadership Academies enroll cohorts of around 20 teachers and other school or central office staff who display a strong commitment to becoming a principal in a high-needs school. Participants meet weekly to learn from each other and focus on a case-study curriculum. These principals-to-be also will get hands-on learning as they complete a full-time, year-long clinical residency experience in an area school. Thanks to special partnerships among participating school districts, community colleges and universities, some of these aspiring principals can earn credit toward a Master's in School Administration when they complete this program.

National Board Certified Teachers and other talented educators are true assets to our state. We could not make progress or achieve our goals in education without them. But every student and teacher also deserves a great school leader. With nearly half of the state's principals expected to retire in the next four years, it is more important than ever that we focus on programs such as these Leadership Academies that will train the next generation of professionals to inspire students and teachers and successfully lead our schools in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill".

Bill Harrison, Chairman
State Board of Education